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Viewing cable 05CAIRO9249, ASD RODMAN DISCUSSES FMF, REGIONAL AFFAIRS, AND

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#05CAIRO9249**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05CAIRO9249	2005-12-13 10:41	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/9135>
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<http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/10185>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 009249

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAL](#) [EAID](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [SY](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: ASD RODMAN DISCUSSES FMF, REGIONAL AFFAIRS, AND
THE ELECTIONS WITH DEFMIN TANTAWI

Classified by Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) Minister of Defense Field Marshal Tantawi and Assistant Secretary of Defense Rodman discussed the vulnerability of Egypt's Foreign Military Financing (FMF), regional affairs, and internal politics during their December 1 meeting, held while Mr. Rodman was in Cairo for the annual Military Cooperation Committee meetings with Egyptian counterparts. The Ambassador, LTG Kohler, RADM Moeller, OMC Chief MG Bagby, and DAT Seel attended. Mr. Rodman urged Tantawi to develop a transformation strategy and publicize Egypt's contributions to regional stability and the Global War on Terror. On regional matters, Tantawi said that Egypt would like to see more progress in the Peace Process. He also urged the U.S. to engage President Asad because a post-Asad regime could be worse than the status quo. Tantawi said that Egyptian progress toward democracy is proceeding at an appropriate pace and cautioned the U.S. against rushing the process or presuming that a formula for reform that may have worked elsewhere would be suitable for Egypt. Tantawi asked the U.S. team to use its influence to persuade the Administration and the Congress of the importance of both the broader bilateral relationship and the military assistance component of the relationship with Egypt. End summary.

Military Assistance

2. (C) FMF Debates in Congress: Field Marshal Tantawi thanked Assistant Secretary of Defense Rodman during their December 1 meeting for Rodman's efforts and those of the U.S. mission in Cairo to ensure that Congress earmarked Egypt's FMF. When the Field Marshal predicted that the debate over FMF would continue in Congress next year, Rodman stressed that Egypt must persuade Congress that the U.S. - Egyptian military relationship matters. The MoD, Rodman urged, should develop its transformation strategy (including a review of threats and objectives, doctrine, training, organization, and materiel) to show that Egypt's military can and will transform to increase its efficiency and support common strategic interests. Tantawi asked for a clarification of Congress's request that the Department of State report on the proper balance of military and economic assistance. The Ambassador suggested that the MoD proactively partner with other Ministries to gather the information on Egypt's political/military/economic strategy that the Embassy needs to draft this report.

3. (C) Public Affairs: Rodman also encouraged the Field Marshal to bolster the MoD's public image by allowing the media to cover events such as the recent donation of MI-17 helicopter parts to Pakistan to assist earthquake relief efforts, the delivery of arms and ammunition to Afghanistan, and the work of Egypt's peacekeepers in Sudan. Tantawi promised to consider the advice, but noted that Egypt depends greatly on the U.S. to carry its water on the Hill and asked the Administration to support Egypt more strongly next year.

4. (C) Importance of FMF to Civil Society: Tantawi told the U.S. team that because of the military's active role in development projects (including, for example, building schools, roads, and health clinics), reducing or redirecting

Egypt's FMF would have a direct impact on this aspect of the economy and consequently on civil society's view of the military. The Egyptian people love the military because the military's development work improves their everyday lives, Tantawi explained. But if the military loses U.S. assistance and cannot participate in such projects, the people will not be happy. "I don't want to say it is dangerous," Tantawi warned, "but the impact will not be good."

Regional Affairs

15. (C) Iraq: Tantawi said that the GOE is committed to supporting the political process in Iraq and will encourage Sunnis to participate in the political process. However he also underlined that not all of the insurgents are Sunni. Iraq's unity is critical, Tantawi stressed, and a break up would be "disastrous".

16. (C) Tantawi urged the USG to maintain momentum on the Peace Process. He warned that the recent agreement on Gaza cannot be the end of our efforts and said we must all work to take another step in the process. Syria presents another problem, Tantawi acknowledged, but the U.S. should give Asad a chance to cooperate because he is better than the alternatives. When Rodman pressed that Syria must not allow its territory to serve as a sanctuary for terrorists, Tantawi responded that things are better handled between Syria and Iraq.

Mil/Mil Cooperation

17. (C) RADM Moeller asked Tantawi to consider participating in Task Force 150, which works to stop the flow of terrorists and related materials in the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Aden. Observing that Pakistan would be commanding the Task Force in 2006, RADM Moeller said that there may be a possibility that Egypt could command at some point in the future. Declining to make a commitment, Tantawi instructed his Chief of Staff, LTG Samy Enan, to study the matter and find a way for Egypt to participate.

Internal Politics

18. (C) Tantawi said that Egypt had made a "good start" on democracy, but noted that the process would take time as it had in the U.S. Rodman remarked that democratization would be a force for moderation. Nonetheless, Tantawi said, democracy-building is not a one-size-fits-all initiative, and what works in other countries may not be palatable in Egypt. The Ambassador explained that the USG agrees that democracy must develop in a way that works for Egypt and Egyptians, but the people still need to feel that they own the government and have a voice. He then noted that GOE treatment of the political opposition (such as Ayman Nour) will generate great interest in Washington. The Ambassador stressed the need to avoid a political backslide that would affect the bilateral relationship. Speaking in Arabic, Tantawi asked the U.S. team to support Egypt by exerting its influence to ensure that the relationship retains the importance it has always had.

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